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PROCEEDINGS

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GENERAL NOTES.

JAW OF FOSSIL WHALEBONE WHALE : SIPHONOCETUS PRISCUS.

The Department of Geology and Geography at The Catholic University of America announces the finding and restoration of the left mandibular ramus of the Miocene whale, SIPHONOCETUS PRISCUS. The remain was removed from the bluffs of Chesapeake Bay a short distance above Scientist Cliffs, southern Maryland, during September, 1937, by Dr. Arthur R. Barwick and John H. Dante, and restored under the supervision of the former. Although somewhat fractured, the jaw is remarkably complete. The end toward the symphysis is in perfect condition and the articular extremity in a good state of preservation. The Department is indebted to Dr. Remington Kellogg of the United States National Museum for its identification as SIPHONOCETUS PRISCUS.

The jaw is now permanently mounted and placed in the Museum of Geology at The Catholic University of America. It is entirely edentulous and arcuate in shape. It has an actual length of 118 centimeters and a chord length of 115 centimeters. The greatest departure of the chord from the bony surface is 8 centimeters. The coronoid process is 15 centimeters from the articular end or about 1/8 of the entire length of the jaw. The average width (dorso-ventral) is 7 centimeters and the thickness 4 centimeters.

The age of the strata from which the remain was removed is Calvert Miocene and comprises that portion referred to by the Maryland Geological Survey as Zone 12. The jaw was found about four feet above low-tide level and extended into the bank so that, at the time of discovery, only the extreme end of the articular region was exposed. When the matrix was removed it was found that the main shaft—although badly fractured—was completely in alignment as though it had been buried quickly. The coronoid and articular portions, however, were badly out of line as though this portion had protruded from the sea-bottom for a more or less protracted period after the main shaft had been covered. If this was the case, the pieces that had been broken loose could not have been exposed to very strong currents or they would have been washed away. In addition to this the matrix is a fine gray sandy clay which must have been deposited a considerable distance off-shore. It is thought that these facts might indi-

cate that Zone 12, exposed at the mouth of Parker Creek, was formed on the outer limits of land-wash resulting from the major rivers of its time, and that the rate of deposition was subject to seasonal changes as such an hypothesis would suppose. It is a noteworthy fact that the more strictly sandy beds of the Choptank that succeed the upper (Zones 12–15) Calvert contain only an occasional disarticulated vertebra of a whale, whereas it is not uncommon to find well preserved and fairly complete dolphin remains in Zones 12 and 13.

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